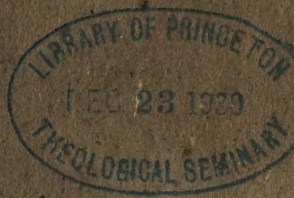


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Franklin Lectures

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

A Discourse,

DELIVERED IN TENNYSON-STREET CHAPEL,
NOTTINGHAM,

On July 25th, 1876,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSEMBLING OF THE

WESLEYAN-METHODIST CONFERENCE.

BEING

THE SIXTH LECTURE ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LATE

JOHN FERNLEY, ESQ.

WITH NOTES.

BY THE REV. HENRY W. WILLIAMS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "AN EXPOSITION OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS," ETC.

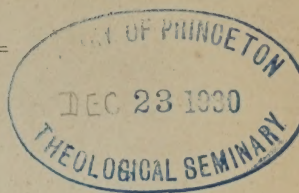
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THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

I CANNOT enter upon the engagement of this evening without adverting, as many of you will have already done in your own minds, to the circumstances which have rendered necessary an interval of two years since the last Fernley Lecture was delivered. The beloved and honoured minister who had been requested to undertake, at the last Conference, this arduous but honourable service, was suddenly called from among us; and I should not be doing justice to my own feelings, were I not to express the sorrow which I experience, in common with our whole Connexion, that we have not the advantage of possessing his matured thoughts on the profoundly interesting subject which he had selected. Many of us remember, with pleasure and gratitude, the lucid exposition which was given to us, at the Camborne Conference, of the doctrine of a Future Life, as contained in the Old Testament Scriptures; and it would have been to us a privilege and joy to listen to a statement of the disclosures of that life given under the Christian economy,—such a statement as the devout, the highly cultivated, and richly furnished mind of the Rev. LUKE HOULT WISEMAN would have presented, approaching the subject, as he did, when his piety was matured, and when the light of that world upon which he has now entered gladdened, while it chastened, his spirit. I can only hope that some future Lecturer will take up this theme, and assist us to apprehend more clearly the glorious hopes of the Gospel, and to anticipate with calm and serene

confidence the blessedness of that state where we shall “be with Christ, which is far better.”

The subject on which I now propose to address you is a very different one, but one which has an undying interest for every Christian, and which is intimately connected with all our privileges and hopes. We have to consider *the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

For a moment or two let us reflect on the great peculiarity of Christianity, that all its truths, its promises, its hopes, gather round ONE GLORIOUS PERSON, in whom the eternal purposes of the Father’s grace are fulfilled, and in union with whom all true believers enjoy the Father’s complacency, and are invested with the loftiest privileges. The Lord Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, is the object of our trust, the ground of our acceptance, and the source of our spiritual life. The offices which He sustains have the most direct and important bearing on our salvation; while the relations in which we stand to Him—if we have indeed become His people by “believing on His Name”—are intimate and endearing.

He is the Prophet of His Church. To Him we bow as the Infallible Teacher,—the Revealer of the Father,—in whom the gradual and fragmentary disclosures of truth given under former dispensations are completed. His recorded words command our submission and inspire our confidence; and, as we ponder them, we perceive, yet more and more clearly, the fulness of truth which they contain, while the grace that breathes through them attracts our hearts. But it is not thus only that the Lord Jesus teaches us. He is Himself the revelation of the Father’s perfections; and as we trace His footsteps, and mark the outbeamings of His moral excellencies, and especially of His commingling holiness and love,

we “see the Father.” And then He speaks to us in the writings of His Apostles,—those writings which were composed under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost, sent down by Him to qualify them for their special duties, as well as to impart to them, and to all who should receive Him, the fulness of spiritual life. “These things,” He said to the faithful eleven, after the last supper, “have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John xiv. 25, 26). “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you” (John xvi. 12—15). The full disclosure of the Christian scheme, in the several relations of the Mediator’s Person and work, and in the amplitude of blessing conferred on all who are united to Him, was reserved for the Spirit, when the Lord Jesus should have ascended to the throne of His glory. And now, as we reverently study these Sacred Records, that Spirit aids us in our inquiries, sheds light upon their deeper truths, and applies them to our hearts so as to promote our sanctification. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. iii. 18).

To the Lord Jesus, too, we bow as the Mediatorial Sovereign. He rules in "the kingdom of God." Its laws are established by His authority ; its blessings are conferred by His unceasing agency. He administers the whole economy of grace. It is His to raise up, from time to time, the human instruments by whom His truth is diffused, His people are edified and established, and the purity and order of His Church are conserved ; and the Holy Ghost Himself, whose living energy only can give success to human efforts, and render the word of truth effectual to enlighten, and sanctify, and save, is His gift to our race. Over His people He exercises a most benign as well as a righteous sway. He provides for their wants ; He succours them in their conflicts ; He upholds them in the discharge of duty ; and He orders the discipline of life with a view to their advancement in holiness and their everlasting triumph. He, too, sways the sceptre of the Universe. "All power is given unto" Him "in heaven and in earth." He is exalted "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ;" and "all things" are "put under His feet." Amidst the changes and conflicts of earth, we may rest in the assurance, that His control extends to every created agency, that He will "make the wrath of man to praise Him," and that "the remainder of wrath" He will "restrain." Thus, as the ages roll on, He rules His Church and the world, and at length He will appear in the majesty of the final Judge, when "every knee shall bow" to Him, and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

But we look to Him also as our Priest. In many respects the interest which attaches to this character of our Lord sur-

passes that of every other. As sinful men, we need a Mediator who shall open to us, by an availing and effectual sacrifice, the way into the Father's presence, and who shall appear as our Representative when, in conscious demerit and utter feebleness, we draw near to seek the mercy and grace which we need. And to this office of our Lord special prominence is given in the Divine Word. For many ages before the Messiah's manifestation, the reverent thought of devout men was directed to this theme, and His priesthood was spoken of as holding a most important place in the Divine arrangements for human recovery. In that remarkable Messianic psalm, which set forth the enthronement and mediatorial sovereignty of the coming Saviour, which announced the wide diffusion of His truth and grace, affirmed the entire devotion to Him of His consecrated people who should surround Him in His day of power, and declared the ultimate overthrow of all His enemies,—His lofty, unique, and unchanging priesthood was proclaimed, as determined by the irrevocable oath of the Eternal Father. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek." And when we pass to the ampler disclosures of the plans of God made by our Lord Himself, and by His Apostles under the inspiration of the Spirit, we find that the sacrifice which He has offered for the sins of the world is the grand theme of the completed revelation, and that the continual presentation by Himself of that sacrifice in the heavenly world is set forth as the hope of His people in every age. The efficacy of that sacrifice knows no change or diminution; and the unfailing exercise of His priesthood assures us that all spiritual blessings shall be ours if we humbly trust in Him, that His communications of grace shall reach to the utmost

limit of our need, and that through Him we shall enjoy for ever a life of blessedness and glory.

But to enable us to understand our Lord's priesthood, and to appreciate its distinguishing features, it is necessary for us to look at the general subject of priesthood, as that institution existed under former dispensations of religion. For it was the plan of Divine wisdom to prepare the way for the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh, and the working out of our redemption by Him, by a series of typical arrangements and prophetic announcements. Without the training supplied by these preparatory systems, the human mind would have been incapable of apprehending the full significance of the great facts of the Redeemer's history, or their bearing on the salvation of mankind.

First of all, then, let us ask, What is a priest? What is essential to the priestly character, and what are the essential functions of the priestly office?

There is, indeed, a wide and general sense in which all who are truly devoted to God, who are partakers of His holiness, and who are admitted to communion with Him, under every dispensation of religion, are spoken of as priests. Thus, when Jehovah addressed the people of Israel through Moses, just before the solemn scene of Sinai, He said to them, "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exodus xix. 5, 6). The privileges thus held forth to them included their separation from the ungodly world,—their actual consecration to the Divine service,—and their permission to draw near to God, to hold fellowship with Him. Such, too, are the privi-

leges of that universal priesthood of believers, under the Gospel, which is so often referred to in the New Testament; but they are realised by us in greater fulness. The anointing of the Spirit which we may receive, now that the Lord Jesus has ascended to the throne of His glory, may be so abundant as to hallow our whole nature to God, and render even the ordinary duties of life parts of sacred service. We, too, "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Our communion with God is marked by the freedom and confidence of the filial relation; and the spiritual sacrifices which we offer—the sacrifices of praise, and prayer, and devout and benevolent actions—are acceptable to the Father through Him who has opened to us the "new and living way" to the mercy-seat, and whose Spirit actuates our worship and governs our whole being.

But we have to do with the subject of priesthood in the strict and proper sense, and we again ask, What is essential to the priestly character, and what are the essential functions of the priestly office?

The reply to these questions is suggested by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as he enters upon the formal discussion of the priesthood of our Lord: "For every high priest, being taken from among men, is ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1).

The first thing, then, implied in the character of a priest is, that he has been constituted, by Divine authority, the Representative of his fellow-men, or, at least, of some portion of them, so as in their name, and on their behalf, to draw near to God. He is "ordained," or "appointed," "for men," with relation to their religious interests, their position and

hopes as the subjects of the Divine government. He is a mediator between the Eternal One and those of his fellow-men for whom he has been commissioned to act.

In the second place, it is essential to the character of a priest, that he should present to God offerings and sacrifices for sins on behalf of those whom he represents. This, too, the Apostle distinctly recognises. Indeed, the grand and distinguishing function of priesthood, in its strict and proper sense, is the offering of a sacrifice for sin, and the solemn presentation of that sacrifice to God, in the manner which He has prescribed.

In the next place, it belongs to the office of a priest earnestly to intercede with God on behalf of those whom he represents, and for whom he offers sacrifice,—that the Divine favour may gladden them, and that all the blessings included in the Divine counsel may be vouchsafed to them.

And then, fourthly, it belongs to the priestly office, solemnly to bless men in the name of Jehovah. That mediatorial communion with God which this office involved was to issue in blessing to those on whose behalf it was exercised. Dr. Kurtz has observed, “Like all communion, this also was reciprocal. Priestly approach to God involved both bringing to God, and bringing back from God. The priests brought into the presence of God the sacrifices and gifts of the people, and brought from God His gifts for the people, viz., reconciliation and His blessing.”* Every devout mind will love to linger on the fulness of spiritual truth and holy privilege, indicated in the form of benediction prescribed to Aaron and his sons:—“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak

* *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament.* Translated by James Martin, B.A. T. and T. Clark. P. 36.

unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee ; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them ” (Numb. vi. 22—27).

Collecting these particulars into one general result, may we not say that a priest stands as the Divinely-appointed Representative of his fellow-men before God,—that on their behalf he offers sacrifices for sins,—that for them he makes intercession,—and that then he comes forth to bless them in the name of Jehovah ?

Going back, then, to the patriarchal age, we find that the head of every household discharged the functions of the priestly office for himself and his family. Noah, when he came forth out of the ark, built an altar to Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings of every clean beast and every clean fowl (Gen. viii. 20). Job was accustomed to offer burnt-offerings for his sons and daughters (Job i. 5). So, also, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars to Jehovah, chiefly upon the spots where they had been favoured with revelations of His presence, and there they offered sacrifices to Him. At the institution of the Passover, the head of every family discharged the priestly functions in connection with that sacrifice. This right descended to the firstborn son, and was one of the distinctions that gave value to the birthright, and rendered the slighting of it a “ profane ” act.

But in the patriarchal age there stands forth to our view one who was specially constituted “ the Priest of the Most High God,” and who was selected by Divine wisdom to be

the type of the priesthood of the Incarnate Son of God. The memorable incident of the meeting of Melchisedek and Abraham is rich in instruction. "And Melchisedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Gen. xiv. 18—20). At a later stage of our inquiries, we shall have occasion to dwell on the significance of everything recorded of Melchisedek, as illustrating the peculiar character of our Lord's priesthood, and on the significance, also, of the silence of the sacred narrative respecting some particulars which we might have wished to inquire into. Here we have to do simply with the fact, that in this early age there was a Priest-King, invested by express Divine appointment with the sacerdotal office, one whose superior dignity the patriarch Abraham acknowledged, and who "blessed" even that patriarch, with whom God had entered into covenant, and who stood, as it were, as the representative of God's Church upon earth.

When the Most High was pleased to ordain for His people Israel an elaborate system of worship, the centre of which was the tabernacle, in which He revealed His presence, and which was "sanctified by His glory," He chose the tribe of Levi in the place of the firstborn of Israel for sacred service, and Aaron and his descendants for the special functions of the priesthood. In the consecration, indeed, of Aaron and his sons to their office, Moses acted as the priest of God, just as he had already done when the whole nation entered into a solemn covenant with the Most High. On that occasion,

when he had read from the book of the covenant the words of Jehovah, and the people had answered, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient," Moses took the blood of the victims slain by his direction, and sprinkled it both on the book itself and on the people, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8; Heb. ix. 18—20). The consecration of Aaron and his sons to their priestly service was peculiarly solemn and impressive. They were brought by Moses to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and, having laid aside their ordinary garments, their bodies were washed with pure water, and then they were arrayed in the vestments which were distinctive of the sacerdotal office. Aaron, too, as the high priest, was anointed with the holy anointing oil, prepared according to the express instructions given to Moses, to indicate his separation to the special service of God, and to symbolise the rich and attractive grace of the Spirit which that service required. In this anointing, when the peculiar ceremonies of the day were further advanced, his sons appear to have participated.* Next came the immolation of a bullock as a sin-offering, after Aaron and his sons had laid their hands on its head,—an impressive intimation of the truth, that they who were to draw near to God, to present sacrifices and to intercede for others, must have their own guilt cancelled, and themselves be reconciled to the Most High. Then there was the sacrifice of a ram as a burnt-offering, on which also Aaron and his sons laid their hands,—to set forth that entire self-surrender to God which their high vocation required. This was followed by the sacrifice of another ram as a peace-offering, some of

* See note A.

the blood of which was put upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron and his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, thus intimating that their ears should ever be open to the Divine voice, and be consecrated to holy truth, and that those members of the body which were to be active in Divine ministration were to be specially hallowed to God. Selected portions of this ram, together with cakes of unleavened bread, were then put by Moses into the hands of Aaron and his sons, that they might wave them as a wave-offering before the Lord, and then they were burnt for a sweet savour unto Him; while other portions were afterwards eaten by Aaron and his sons, to intimate that covenant-fellowship with Jehovah which was to follow the cancelling of their guilt, and their entire dedication to His service.

From this time, among the covenant-nation, the priestly functions were discharged by Aaron and his descendants. Aaron, indeed, as the high priest, was invested with special dignity, and had special duties and responsibilities; and this honour subsequently descended to the successive heads of the family, according to the right of primogeniture. But his sons, too, discharged priestly functions; and so did their descendants in successive generations, when they had attained the proper age, and had been duly consecrated to the sacred office. They watched over the sacred fire on the altar of burnt-offering, to keep it continually burning. They ministered daily in the first apartment of the tabernacle. They attended to the lamps of the golden candlestick, keeping them also continually burning,—the emblem of the fulness of light which God imparts to His true worshippers; they attended also to the show-bread, replacing the old cakes on each suc-

cessive Sabbath with new ones,—the emblem of the unfailing supply of spiritual nourishment which God has provided for those who wait on Him; and they burned the incense,—the symbol of the prayers and devotions of God's people. They, too, offered the morning and evening sacrifice,—a lamb of the first year being presented, as a burnt-offering, on behalf of the whole people, in the morning of each day, and another in the evening, in immediate connection with the tabernacle, as the place where God condescended to meet with His people. The priests, too, were charged to offer the special sacrifices of each recurring Sabbath; and they had also to receive, and to offer to God, the sacrifices brought by individual worshippers. Thus they mediated between Jehovah and their brethren, presenting their offerings and sacrifices to Him, and pronouncing on the humble and devout His effectual blessing.

But in considering the priestly system, as it existed under the law, the peculiar functions of the high priest, and the solemn transactions of the day of atonement,—a day of general humiliation, when every Israelite was to “afflict his soul,”—specially claim our attention. It was on that day only, throughout the year, that he—he alone of all the people of Israel—was permitted to go into the holy of holies, which formed the symbol of the heavenly sanctuary, the place of Jehovah's throne of righteousness and grace. Had the high priest ventured on any other day to go into that most sacred spot,—had he entered it without the blood of the appointed victims,—had he omitted any of the services and rites which were enjoined in connection with the solemn act of expiation,—death would have been the immediate result. For the engagements of that day he was to prepare himself by the

strictest ceremonial purity. Having laid aside his gorgeous dress, he was to wash his whole body in water, and then to put on the holy garments, made entirely of white linen. For himself and his house he was to bring a young bullock as a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering; while for the people of Israel generally two kids of the goats were to be presented as a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. The two goats were brought before the door of the tabernacle, and there presented to Jehovah; and lots were cast on them to decide which should be offered in sacrifice, and which, when the solemn act of expiation should be completed, should be sent away, laden, as it were, with the sins of the people, into the wilderness. The high priest then proceeded to slay the bullock which formed the sin-offering for himself and his family, and taking a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar,—that fire which had been kindled from heaven,—together with sweet incense beaten small, he put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, as he drew aside the vail which separated the holy of holies from the outer sanctuary, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat, and then with his finger he sprinkled the blood of the bullock upon the mercy-seat eastward and before the mercy-seat seven times. Going forth from the holy of holies, he next slew the goat upon which the lot had fallen to be offered in sacrifice, and again entered the inmost sanctuary with the same observances as before, and sprinkled the blood of this victim also upon the mercy-seat and before it. Thus did the high priest of Israel make atonement for his own sins and the sins of the people; and thus, too, did he purify the tabernacle itself, with its sacred furniture, as having been defiled by the presence and ministrations of sinful

men. For the great brazen altar, also, which stood before the tabernacle proper, he made atonement, taking of the blood of the bullock and the goat, putting it upon the horns of the altar, and sprinkling it with his finger seven times. Then the high priest laid his hands on the head of the living goat, and confessed over him the accumulated iniquities of the people of Israel; and this goat was sent away into the wilderness by the hands of some person specially selected for that service. The appointed expiation having thus been made, the high priest returned into the holy place, put off the linen garments with which he had gone into Jehovah's presence, again bathed himself, put on his usual garments of office, and then came forth to offer the two rams as burnt-offerings, one for himself and the other for the people. He also burnt upon the altar the fat of the sin-offerings, the blood of which he had taken into the holy of holies; but the flesh of these victims was carried without the camp,—and in after ages without the sacred enclosure,—and wholly burnt with fire. The persons who performed this service, and he who led away the living goat into the wilderness, were required afterwards to bathe themselves, and might then come into the congregation of God's people.

These arrangements of the great day of atonement, under the Mosaic constitution, were full of significance. They showed that, although God condescended to dwell among His people Israel, yet He, as *the* HOLY ONE, could not come into fellowship with men, except through the intervention of a sacrifice,—a sacrifice prescribed by Himself, and brought into His presence in the very manner which He had appointed. These arrangements, too, showed the inferior and

preparatory character of that dispensation. Access to God, to hold intimate communion with Him, was not represented as thrown open to all His people. To one man only, and to him only on one day in each year, was it permitted to go into the very presence of Jehovah. The daily ministrations of the priestly representatives of the people were carried on in the first apartment of the tabernacle,—the holy place separated from the most holy by the intervening vail. The whole system bore on it the stamp of an introductory economy. It pointed to the entrance of a far higher Priest, in the fulness of time, into the true holy of holies; but how different the circumstances of that entrance, and how different its results! And here I cannot refrain from quoting the beautiful and impressive words of the late Dr. Pye Smith:—

“Aaron and each of his successors passed through all the precincts and courts of the earthly sanctuary, till he arrived at his solitary and awful station; and there, accompanied by no mortal, with light such as rendered but darkly visible the ark of the covenant, the golden mercy-seat, and the cherubim of glory, he sprinkled the blood of typical expiation, presented the incense, and prayed for his nation. But the Messiah, as a real and not an emblematical High Priest, with an expiation and a righteousness not figurative but of infinite worth in the eyes of eternal holiness, ascends on high; He passes through all the regions of beauty and greatness in the invisible world, receiving in this triumphant progress the joyous homage of angels, principalities, and powers (Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 22); He enters into that state of supreme majesty which is pre-eminently the heavenly world; He takes His seat of authority; He displays it to us as the ‘throne of grace;’ He invites

our devout approach; and He insures to us the greatest blessings.”*

Such, then, was the system of priesthood established under the Mosaic economy. During long ages that economy continued. While all around the darkness of heathenism was deepening, and the speculations of philosophy were powerless to dispel its gloom, and, indeed, left the masses of the people wholly untouched, the Jewish Church presented the very truth of God, embraced a form of religious fellowship founded on a common relation to Jehovah established and maintained through sacrifice, and invited the approach of devout men of every nation to engage in His worship, and even to come into this fellowship by submitting to circumcision and to all the requirements of the law. The instructive symbols of the tabernacle, and the whole course of sacrificial offerings, were doubtless objects of interest to many of God’s ancient people. They cherished the feelings so beautifully expressed by the Psalmist:—“One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple” (Ps. xxvii. 4). Such minds were gradually trained to an apprehension of the great principles involved in the scheme of redemption; and they looked forward, though often with dim and shadowy perceptions of the truth, to the coming of the Messiah, the offices which He should sustain, and the working out of our redemption by Him. We have the explicit testimony of our Lord Himself, that many prophets, and kings, and righteous men, had desired to see the things which

* *Four Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and the Atonement and Redemption Thence Accruing.* Third Edition. P. 81.

were, at length, disclosed to those who surrounded Him when in the flesh. To us, too, these symbols and services minister instruction. They enable us to understand, far more clearly than we could otherwise have done, the deep significance of the Redeemer's work, of His sacrificial sufferings, and of His present intercession on our behalf.

Meanwhile the intimations of prophecy set Him forth as the Refuge, the Hope, the Life of men, and bore witness to the scheme of grace which should, in the fulness of time, be unfolded. Among these intimations several recognised His priestly character. Foremost among these was the 110th Psalm, already referred to. David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, acknowledged the future Restorer as his own Lord, beheld Him by faith enthroned at the right hand of the Eternal Father, swaying a sceptre of righteousness and grace, and exercising, at the same time, an unchanging and everlasting priesthood,—a priesthood conferred upon Him by the Father's irrevocable oath, as one leading feature of His counsel for the salvation of mankind, and the manifestation of His own essential glory. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion : rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning : Thou hast the dew of Thy youth. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek." The prophet Isaiah, too, in that remarkable section of his writings in which he portrays the sufferings of the Messiah,—sufferings not only inflicted by men, but deriving their chief intensity from the fact that He took the

place of the guilty, so as to endure the penal inflictions of the Father's hand,—closes this prophecy with a reference to the intercession which, on the ground of His sacrificial death, he should make for the transgressors. “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah liii. 4—6). “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (vv. 10—12). In the prophecies of Zechariah, too, we find a distinct announcement of the union of priesthood with royalty in the Person of Him who should arise from the stock of David, and who should build the spiritual temple of Jehovah, in which His own glory should be specially revealed: “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and

shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 12, 13).

At length the Lord Jesus Himself appeared, in outward lowliness, but with a moral glory that attracted and impressed every devout spirit that was brought near to Him. The Son of God took our nature into indissoluble union with His own Eternal Personality; and, after His life on earth of spotless purity and active goodness, yielded up Himself to death, even the death of the Cross. He is our High Priest; He is Himself, also, the Sacrifice for our sins; and through His abiding intercession—through the constant presentation of His sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary—we can have access even to that holiest place, and can enjoy tranquillising and sanctifying communion with the Father.

It is important for us to mark that the mysterious constitution of our Lord's Person qualified Him to be our High Priest. We have seen that it was THE SON in the Triune Godhead who became incarnate to redeem us. He was the Agent in the work of creation, not independently of the Eternal Father, but in ineffable union with Him, and carrying out His counsel; and He, too, "upholdeth all things by the word of His power." And may we not say that the relation of the Son to the created universe, and especially to the race of mankind, as that Divine Person by whom the Father "made the worlds," and who, from the very first, has been "the Life" and "the Light" of men, gives to His interposition, in the fulness of time, to redeem and save us, a profound significance which our reverent thought can only imperfectly apprehend? "In Him," says St. Paul, "were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth,

visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist;" and then, passing to His relation to His people, who embrace Him as their Saviour under the mediatorial constitution, he adds, "And He is the Head of the body, the Church; who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 16—18).*

But in this stage of our inquiries the great argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews comes in. In the very front of that argument the writer places the fact on which we have just dwelt, that He in whom we have the completed revelation of the Father, and who, having offered an effectual atonement for our sins, has taken His place of authority at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is *THE SON*, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His Person, the Creator and Sustainer of universal nature, exalted by His eternal and essential relation to the Father far above all the hosts of angels, and the Object of their lowliest homage and adoration. But, in connection with this truth, he places the perfect humanity of our Lord, and His subjection, during His state of humiliation, to the sorrows and temptations to which we, His brethren, are exposed. When, at a later point in his argument, he enters upon a formal unfolding of the priesthood of our Lord, he mentions two essential requisites of every high priest constituted on behalf of men. The former is, that he must be himself a man, and must know, by personal experience, the weakness, and conflicts, and sufferings, common to our humanity, so as to be able to enter into the feelings of

* See note B.

those whom he represents, and to sympathise with them in their trials. The latter is, that he must be designated to that office by God, for it would be most unwarrantable and presumptuous for any man to stand forth unbidden and unauthorised, as the representative of his fellow-men, to go into the presence of God, to offer sacrifices for their sins, and to intercede with Him on their behalf. Both these requisites, he teaches us, existed, in their highest perfection, in the case of our blessed Lord. His perfect humanity, and His deep experience of human suffering, qualified Him to be a merciful as well as a faithful High Priest, entering into all the sorrows of His people, and standing ready to succour them in all their conflicts. In assuming our nature, the Eternal Son became the righteous Servant of the Father, and submitted to all the humiliation and sorrow which became the Representative of a sinful race. His earthly history involved a progressive experience of suffering, and brought out, in yet more and more striking development, the perfect character of His obedience, until amidst the awful agonies of Calvary He could exclaim, "It is finished," and then "bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." Thus, "though He was the Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God a High Priest after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. v. 8, 9).

This is a thought on which we may well linger, since an inspired writer has invited us to reflect how fully our Lord's experience of human sorrow qualified Him to be the Priestly Representative of our race. Throughout "the days of His flesh," He knew fatigue, and weakness, and pain. He knew, too, the deeper sorrows of the spirit. His heart was wounded

by unkindness and ingratitude. As He looked upon the various forms of human misery, His exquisite susceptibility made them all His own. The tears which He shed as He stood at the grave of Lazarus, though He was just about to perform an act which would reveal His own glory and dispel the gloom that rested on that scene, showed how deeply He felt for the woes which the ravages of mortality involve. He, too, was assailed by the leader of the powers of darkness, though He instantly repelled all his foul suggestions. Thus did He identify Himself with us, His brethren, whom He represents before the Father, and who, as "the house," the family, "of God," stand in the most intimate relation to Him, and are designed ultimately to share His glory.

But, to show how fully our Lord possesses the first requisite of a High Priest for men, the Apostle seeks to rivet attention on one scene in His earthly history, of surpassing solemnity and awe. He leads us to Gethsemane, to contemplate the Incarnate Son oppressed with anguish, and giving utterance to that anguish in reiterated prayers and supplications to the Father. "Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Heb. v. 7). No thoughtful Christian can reflect on that mysterious scene without a solemn impression of the truth which it is adduced to illustrate,—that the Lord Jesus knew by personal experience the deepest sorrows of our frail nature. The "strong crying and tears" of which the Apostle speaks show how His humanity bent beneath the load which then pressed upon it. To many a human heart had He spoken peace, and many a scene of gloom had He brightened by the putting forth of His almighty

power; but now He Himself endures the very extremity of distress, and seeks relief, even as His people do, in prayer to the Father. And that relief was vouchsafed. In His case, as in the case of His people who now look to Him, an alleviation and temporary removal of suffering were vouchsafed in the Father's own time; but only such an alleviation and suspension as were consistent with the full accomplishment of the work of atonement. That period of intense agony closed; and the Saviour came forth from the garden, placid, tranquil, firm, to meet with calmest dignity the insults of His enemies, and then to go forward to the Cross, again to suffer unexampled mental sorrow, and to die as the Sacrifice for human guilt.

Of the other essential requisite of a High Priest which the Apostle specifies it is not necessary to speak at length. The intimations of the prophetic Scriptures which have already passed before us show how the great Anointed One, who should appear in the fulness of time, was designated, in the Father's counsel, to be the Priestly Representative of men. "No man," says the Apostle, "taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. v. 4—6).

From another point of view we may illustrate the qualifications of the Lord Jesus to be our High Priest. With His eternal and essential relation to the Father, and His relation also to our race, we must connect His perfect sinlessness, as He moved among us. It was essential that He who was to stand as the one Mediator between the Father and man-

kind should be possessed of human righteousness, and should have presented, during His earthly course, an example of spotless obedience. "For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (Heb. vii. 26—28). It has been properly observed by Dr. Kurtz, when contrasting the Aaronic priesthood with that of our Lord, that "from the very nature of the priestly office, as mediatorial, two things were essential to its true and perfect performance; and these the Aaronic priest no more possessed than any one else in the nation who stood in need of mediation. The first and immediate demand for a perfect priesthood, appointed to mediate between the holy God and the sinful nation, would be perfect sinlessness; but how little did the family of Aaron, involved as it was in the general sinfulness, answer to this demand! Secondly, and this was no less essential, true and all-sufficient mediation required that the mediator himself should possess a double-sidedness; and in this the Aaronic priest was quite as deficient as in the first thing demanded, namely, perfect sinlessness. To represent the people in the presence of Jehovah, and Jehovah in the presence of the people, and to be able to set forth in his own person the mediation between the two, he ought to stand in essential union on the one hand with the people, and on the other with God; and in order fully to satisfy this demand, he ought to be as much Divine as human. But the Aaronic

priesthood partook of human nature only, and not at all of Divine. Both demands were satisfied in an absolutely perfect way in that High Priest alone, to whose coming and manifestation the entire history of salvation pointed, who, uniting in His own Person both deity and humanity, was sent in the fulness of time to the chosen people and the whole human race.”*

And now we have to contemplate the Lord Jesus, as our High Priest, offering up His *sacrifice*,—even the sacrifice of Himself. Voluntarily He took the place of the guilty, submitted to penal suffering on account of our transgressions, and died for us an accursed death. Throughout His ministry, indeed, He was “the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;” and foretastes of the bitter anguish that was to come upon Him in all its crushing weight, at the crisis of His great undertaking, often oppressed His spirit. But His purpose to submit to death for us—even the death of the Cross—never faltered; and His supreme desire was, that in His deepest suffering, as well as in His subsequent exaltation, the Father’s Name should be glorified. “Now,” He said, as He drew near to the closing scene of His humiliation, “Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name.” And then there came the voice from heaven, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again” (John xii. 27, 28). In the strength of that holy purpose He went forward to the Cross; and He endured its shame and the mental agony which came upon Him as He hung there, as essential to the recovery of mankind. No obligation rested upon Him to submit to death, on His own account, like that which rests

* *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, pp. 36, 37.

on us, in virtue of the original sentence which subjects all who spring from Adam in the way of natural descent to the degradation of mortality. He was "the Second Man," "the last Adam;" He, too, was pure and spotless; but He placed Himself, for our sakes, beneath the curse of the law. "No man," He once said, "taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x. 18). Thus, while He recognised in this, as in every other part of His mediatorial service and suffering, the appointment of the Father, He affirmed, in the strongest manner, that His submission to death was His own voluntary act. Though that death was one of shame and agony,—one, too, that had been specially marked out as accursed, for it was written in the law, "He that is hanged is accursed of God,"—yet He endured it without a murmur. As the High Priest of our profession, He placed Himself upon the altar of sacrifice, that through His blood our sins might be forgiven, our conscience relieved of its load, and our whole nature hallowed to the Divine service. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, *offered Himself without spot to God*, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 13, 14).

Every variety of expression, of which we can readily conceive, is employed by the Sacred Writers to show that the death of Jesus is the true and perfect sacrifice for sin,—the expiatory offering, on the ground of which, when we are united to Him by faith, our transgressions are cancelled, in perfect harmony with the principles of the Divine govern-

ment, and the power of a new life is diffused through our souls. The Saviour Himself declared, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world " (John vi. 51). When He instituted the sacrament of His Supper, He said expressly, as He handed the cup to His Apostles, " Drink ye all of it ; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins " (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28). St. Peter thus addresses believers : " Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God " (1 Pet. i. 18—21). " Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (iii. 18). The Apostle John writes, " If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world " (1 John ii. 1, 2) : while the Apostle Paul, in innumerable passages, affirms the expiatory character of the Redeemer's death. All his teaching on the subject is an expansion of the truth which he has compressed into the few brief words, " God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him " (2 Cor v. 21).

Nothing can be clearer than that, throughout the New Testament, the death of Jesus is represented as *the objective*

ground on which God remits the sins of those who embrace Him as their Saviour. The moral theory of the atonement—the most plausible and attractive, perhaps, of those forms of modern thought which, while they set aside the expiatory character of the death of Jesus, recognise a relation between it and the salvation of men—is shown, by this single fact, to be essentially defective. That theory, indeed, embraces elements of truth which we cheerfully acknowledge. We admit that the sublime self-sacrifice of the Incarnate Son of God is intended to act upon the selfish heart of man,—to disclose its sinfulness and pollution,—to lead it to the renunciation of sin,—and to win it back to seek the favour of God, and to delight in that which is pure and good. But this is only a portion of the truth; and it leaves out of view the *unique* character of the death of Jesus, and its important relation to *the principles and procedures of the Divine government*. In many respects the death of Jesus stands *alone*,—a fact which we recognise as often as we gather round His table, and partake of the appointed emblems of His body and blood, while we listen to His own emphatic words, that His blood was shed for us, in order to the remission of our sins. Through His death a gratuitous justification is assured to every penitent believer; and the Holy Spirit is sent down to subdue us to repentance, to lead us onward to Him, and to constitute us new creatures. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 13, 14). The *substitution* of the Lord Jesus for the sinful race of men is the truth which pervades the writings of the New Testament. It moulds

the phraseology of the Apostles; it governs all their reasonings; it influences all their representations of Christian privilege and hope. And, as we ponder their language, we perceive how distinctly and firmly they held the truth, that the Incarnate Son of God took the place of the guilty, and bore in death the penalty of our sins, so far as to render it consistent with the full maintenance of the law, the upholding of all the principles of the Father's government, and the accomplishment of the highest ends of His moral administration, for Him to justify and bless with everlasting life all who by faith are united to the Saviour, and thus make His sacrifice their own. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).*

This, then, is the sacrifice which our great High Priest has offered to God for us. He "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). And this sacrifice is *perfect*, *efficient*, and *ever-availing*. Our Lord's resurrection from the dead attested its completeness, its acceptance, and its availing power for the justification of all who should rely on it alone. He "was delivered on account of our offences, and raised again on account of our

* See Note C.

justification." And this sacrifice needs no repetition. It was offered, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews again and again affirms, *once for all*. Contrasting the priestly ministration of the Lord Jesus with the entrance of the Jewish high priests into the typical holy of holies, he says, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Resuming the topic a little afterwards, he says, "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. ix. 24—28; x. 10—14).

But these passages lead us to contemplate *our Lord's exercise of His priesthood in His present state of glory*. The purposes of the Divine government required that the sacrifice offered up on Calvary should be solemnly *presented* in the heavenly sanctuary. Just as the high priest of Israel had to

go, on the great day of atonement, into the holy of holies, with the blood of the appointed victims, to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat and before it, so it was necessary that the Lord Jesus should go, as the High Priest who had offered up Himself, into that most sacred spot where the Eternal Father reveals His presence, and which forms the seat of His moral administration. To all the inhabitants of the heavenly world, nay, in an important sense, to the whole Universe, the completed sacrifice of the Incarnate Son of God is thus set forth as that which forms the basis of the whole economy of grace, and through which all blessing is vouchsafed to the sinful race of man.

But what a contrast was there between the entrance of the Levitical high priest into the typical holy of holies, and the entrance of the Lord Jesus into the heavenly sanctuary ! It was only for a few minutes, on one specified day of the year, that the high priest of Israel was permitted to draw aside the vail which separated the holiest of all from the first sanctuary, and to go with the blood of atonement into the presence of Jehovah. All the circumstances of his entrance into that sacred spot were such as became a sinful man, one who was conscious of manifold infirmities, of moral weakness, and who deeply felt that his own sins, as well as the sins of those whom he represented, needed expiation. Still further, he *stood* to minister in the holiest place. To have sat down there at all would have been an act of awful presumption ; and to have sat down at the right hand of the mercy-seat, over which the shekinah appeared, would have been unutterable profanity. But the Lord Jesus has gone into the true holy of holies once for all. He *abides* in that most sacred place. He is *enthroned* there. He has sat down “on the

right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Thus is the abiding and changeless efficacy of His sacrifice impressively declared; and that sacrifice is recognised as the ground of the mediatorial sovereignty with which He is invested, and as the reason of all the blessings which He now dispenses to mankind.

There is, then, a *continual presentation*, by our Lord, of His own sacrifice in the heavenly world, on behalf of mankind, and especially on behalf of all who come unto God through Him. We do not say, with some, that Christ now offers Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. Such language we regard as inaccurate and misleading. If taken in its strict and proper sense, it would be inconsistent with the truth, that the sacrifice of our Lord was complete and finished when He expired upon the Cross, and that now, every vestige of humiliation and sorrow having passed away, He lives and reigns as the exalted Mediator. Some, indeed, who use this language, understand by it only the continual presentation and pleading by our Lord of the sacrifice of Himself, which was offered on Calvary. This, indeed, is a truth which all evangelical Christians acknowledge. Our glorified Redeemer "appears in the presence of God for us." Enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He appears as the High Priest who has made a perfect atonement for sins, and who has the *right* to confer, in virtue of that atonement, freedom from condemnation and the fulness of spiritual blessing, on all who rely on Him and bow to His authority. And thus He "maketh *intercession* for us." Of the *modes* of that intercession it is not for us to speak, beyond the devout recognition of the fact, that His very presence as our Representative in the heavenly sanctuary,

and His presentation of His own effectual sacrifice, imply intercession of the most powerful and availing character. But we dare not say that this is all; and we reverently draw back from any attempt to speculate on this high and sacred theme.* We rest in the assurance given to us by Inspiration: "But He, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

And now we are prepared to see how fully the prophetic oracle of the ancient Scriptures, which set forth the Messiah as constituted a Priest after the order of Melchisedek, was fulfilled in our blessed Lord. Availing ourselves of the light shed on this subject by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us contemplate the Priest-King of ancient Salem, and reflect on the peculiarities of his priesthood as distinguished from that of the order of Aaron, and foreshadowing that of the Incarnate Son of God. It is not too much to affirm, that everything affecting him was specially arranged by Divine Providence, to constitute him the type of Him who was to come, and whose priestly mediation was to be the hope of the Church of God.

In the first place, the very name which he bore, Melchisedek, "King of righteousness," was significant. There is every reason to think that this name expressed the character of his rule,—that in the administration of the affairs of his city he maintained a strict adherence to that which is just and right. And how appropriate was this name to Him whose priestly rule he was designed to prefigure! *His* sceptre is one of unfailing rectitude; He upholds, in

* See note D.

every act of His administration, the sacred interests of righteousness and truth.

In the next place, it is a remarkable fact that the city over which Melchisedek reigned—that which was afterwards selected by God to be the seat of the theocracy—bore the significant appellation “Peace,” or “City of Peace.” And Melchisedek was a pacific sovereign. While the kings of the neighbouring cities engaged in sanguinary contests with each other, he stood aloof from their enterprises of blood; and, as the Priest-King of his people, he sought to promote their highest interests, while he drew near to God to offer sacrifices for their sins, and to make intercession for them. So, too, our adorable Lord is “the Prince of Peace;” and to His people who gather around Him in His holy Salem, His City of Peace, He imparts peace in all its fulness, while the rich grace of His Spirit confers on them the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. The kingdom of God, as it is now established through His completed sacrifice,—that kingdom over which He reigns as He carries on His priestly intercession for all who bow to His authority and seek His grace,—is distinguished by “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

In the third place, Melchisedek was not one of a race of priests, invested with that office in virtue of his descent from others who had borne it, and in his turn transmitting it to his descendants. He stood *alone*,—the one priest of his own order. He was, as the Apostle affirms, “without genealogy;” his father and mother are unknown to us; his birth and death are not recorded; he received not his priesthood from any other, nor did it pass from him to any other. As far as a mortal man could present a type of an abiding priesthood, he

presented such a type, and thus prefigured, though imperfectly, the priesthood of the Incarnate Son of God.

Nor is the fourth particular respecting Melchisedek without special interest,—that, in his character as “the priest of the Most High God,” he blessed even the patriarch Abraham, and that Abraham gratefully accepted that benediction, and gave to him the tenth of the spoils which he had taken. Abraham had already been called by God to leave his kindred and country, and had received the promise which marked him out as the head of the chosen nation, and assured him that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. He stood, therefore, in an important sense, as the representative of God’s visible Church ; and yet he was blessed by Melchisedek as one higher than himself. Still further, the act by which Abraham acknowledged the superior dignity of Melchisedek, as resulting from his priestly character, bound his descendants not yet begotten ; and thus that act virtually involved an intimation of the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood to the Melchisedecian. “And, as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham ; for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedek met him” (Heb. vii. 9, 10).

And now let us fix our reverent thought on our great High Priest. He, like Melchisedek, unites in His Person the regal and priestly offices ; He is the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace ; He is invested with a priesthood which is peculiar and unique, such as no one before him ever did or could sustain, one, too, which can never pass over to any other, but abides continually in His own sacred Person ; and from Him the universal Church receives the fulness of spiritual blessing.

His priesthood, we have said, is *peculiar* and *unique*; and the evidence of this meets us on every hand. His mysterious *Person* shows it. In Him only the Divine and human natures are united. He only sustains that intimate and essential relation to the Father, and, at the same time, that relation of brotherhood to mankind, which qualify Him to be the Mediator between God and us. The *sacrifice* which He presents shows it. Other sacrifices were typical, and were offered for one occasion only: they were intended, chiefly, to keep up a remembrance of sin, and of its need of expiation. His sacrifice—the sacrifice of Himself—is a true and effectual offering for sin, the virtue of which reached back to former ages, and reaches forward to the very end of time. His priestly mediation, too, has this distinguishing feature,—that it *actually avails to confer spiritual and everlasting life*. The Levitical priests ministered only amidst the material types of spiritual realities; nor could the services which they performed, and the sacrifices which they offered, obtain, of themselves, blessings for men: but our Lord is made a Priest, “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” He becomes to all who humbly accept His mediation, who rely on His sacrifice and bow to His authority, the Source of an indissoluble and unfailing life,—a life which brings them into sympathy with Himself, and assimilates them to His own character,—a life, too, which, after developing its power amidst the relations and changes of earth, shall be realised, in its fulness of peace, and purity, and joy, in the heavenly world.

Such, then, is the priesthood with which our blessed Lord is invested. He stands, and must ever stand, *alone*,—the one High Priest of our profession, through whom all believers

have access to the Father, and from whom they receive, and will for ever receive, the fulness of spiritual blessing.

No one else, we are bold to affirm, is now, in the strict and proper sense, a Priest. We acknowledge, indeed, the universal priesthood of believers,—of all who are truly united to Christ, and who thus receive the anointing of the Spirit, and are permitted to draw near to God, to hold communion with Him, and to present those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to Him through the one perfect offering of the Incarnate Son. But we utterly repudiate the theory which would assign to the Christian ministry the priestly character, in the highest sense of that expression.

The ground on which that theory is based in the theological standards of the Church of Rome is utterly insufficient to sustain it. We turn to the carefully chosen words of the Council of Trent. That Council affirms that our Lord, “in the last supper, on the night in which He was betrayed, that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice, such as the nature of man requires, by which that bloody sacrifice once for all to be completed on the cross might be represented, and the memory of it might remain until the end of the world, and its saving virtue might be applied for the remission of our daily sins,—declaring Himself constituted a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek, offered up His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father; and under the same symbols delivered them to His Apostles, *whom He then constituted priests of the New Testament*, that they might receive them; and commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to offer the same, through these words, ‘Do this in remembrance of Me.’”

Well may it excite our surprise, mingled with bitter sorrow, that such a theory should ever have been founded on the simple narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper, which touches so powerfully the feelings of every Christian heart ! In the passage which we have cited there are three assumptions, each of which we hold to be unfounded and erroneous. It is assumed that, in the last supper, the bread which our Lord gave to His disciples was changed, by a mysterious process, into His very body, and that the wine was changed into His blood ;—it is assumed that, on that occasion, He not only gave these sacramental elements to those who surrounded Him, but really offered up His very body and blood to the Father as a sacrifice ;—and it is assumed that, when He said to His Apostles, “ Do this in remembrance of Me,” He did not refer to the observance of this covenant-rite, as that in which they and all believers should set forth His vicarious and atoning death, and avow their appropriation of His sacrifice for the remission of sins and for eternal life, but that He constituted them Priests, and empowered them and their successors in the priesthood thus to offer Him up as a sacrifice for sin.* This is not the place to enter upon an extended examination of these principles, and to expose their fallacy. It must suffice to say, that they are unsupported by Scriptural testimony ; that the doctrine of transubstantiation, with which the Romish theory of the sacrifice of the mass is bound up, not only contradicts the direct evidence of the senses,—to which evidence our Lord Himself appealed to establish the fact of His own resurrection from the dead,—but is opposed to the language of St. Paul, who repeatedly speaks of the sacramental bread as being still bread when

* See note E.

partaken of by the people of Christ; that it is contrary to Scripture to teach that our Lord twice offered up Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, first at the last supper and then on the Cross; and that the true application of the words on which reliance is placed, as indicating the priestly character of the Ministry, is shown by St. Paul, when he writes to the Corinthians, "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do ye, *as oft as ye drink it*, in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. xi. 25).

But it is not the Church of Rome only that maintains what we conceive to be a fundamental error,—the priestly character of the Christian ministry. That active and energetic party in the Church of England, which seems bent on destroying its distinctively Protestant character, makes prominent the doctrine of the *Eucharistic Sacrifice*, and accordingly holds that the true ministers of Christ are, in the strict and proper sense, Priests. The differences between the Ritualistic theory and that of the Church of Rome may be briefly stated; and it will be seen that, while they may be important in the view of a theologian, they do not affect materially the practical influence of the two systems. The doctrine of transubstantiation is not held by the advocates of Ritualism; but it is affirmed by them that, in some mysterious and ineffable manner, "the body and blood of our Saviour Christ are present really and truly," under the form of bread and wine, "by virtue of the consecration, through the power of the Holy Ghost." The solemn elevation of the sacramental elements is practised, to be instantly followed by the kneeling of the communicants in holy adoration; for the Ritualistic teaching is that, while the sacramental bread and wine are not to be adored, yet "Christ

Himself, really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, present in the sacrament, is *therein* to be adored." And then the Ritualists maintain that the minister, as a priest, does, in an important sense, *offer up* on earth, as well as plead before the Father, the body and blood of His dear Son, even "as in heaven," to use their own carefully selected words, "Christ, our great High Priest, ever offers Himself before the Eternal Father, pleading by His presence His sacrifice of Himself once offered up on the Cross." * The theory, indeed, is, that the minister of Christ, in the eucharistic sacrifice, does that which the Lord Jesus is now doing in heaven, acting as His representative, and solemnly presenting His effectual sacrifice to the Father. "The earthly priest," says the Rev. P. G. Medd, in his *Essay on the Eucharistic Sacrifice*, "no longer as of old the successor of a long line of dead predecessors in a merely typical priesthood, but the present vicarious representative of the one true, real, and ever-living Priest, now for a time corporally absent, acting 'in His Name,' by the power of the Holy Ghost, specially conveyed to him in the gift of holy orders 'for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God,' does on earth that which Jesus does in heaven. Rather, we should say, according to that great principle which is the true key to the whole theory of the Christian ministry, it is JESUS who is Himself the Priest, the Offerer of His own great Sacrifice, in both cases. It is the one Mediator, acting in heaven directly, as we may say, and immediately by Himself, acting on earth indirectly and mediately by His minister as His visible instrument, who, forasmuch as in that most solemn of all his duties he represents the priestly functions of his heavenly Master, is himself, for

* See note F.

that reason, and for that reason only, called a 'priest,' whilst that on which this mysterious transaction takes place, that on which lie, veiled under the visible symbols, that Body and Blood which once for us were sacrificed upon the Cross, is called an 'altar.' " *

Now, our objection to all this is, that it is unsupported by the teaching of the New Testament, and at variance with the beautiful simplicity of its statements, profound though they are, respecting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Had it been the plan of God that under the Christian economy there should be an order of priests, in the strict and proper sense,—that certain priestly functions should, indeed, be the distinctive and most important functions of the Christian ministry,—we cannot but think that this would have been pointed out in those Epistles in which pastoral duties are stated and enforced. But in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus no intimation of this kind is given. Still further, on the supposition in question, we might surely have expected some distinct statement of the priestly character of the ministry in that Epistle in which the subject of priesthood is so clearly unfolded and so largely dwelt upon. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews no such statement is found. Everywhere our thoughts are directed to the one High Priest of our profession, and each of us is invited to come through Him to the Father, the way into the holiest being thrown open to us through His blood, and every blessing that we need being assured to our humble and believing prayer. The one brief statement, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle," by no means implies the doctrine in question.

* *The Church and the World.* Edited by the Rev. Orby Shipley, M.A. First Series, p. 340.

It admits, as we shall see, of a different exposition in perfect harmony with the general tenour of the Epistle. We are bold also to affirm that the doctrine of the real presence, as held by the Ritualists, without which their theory of the eucharistic sacrifice must fall to the ground, is not sustained by the New Testament. The strongest expressions which are found in the discourses of our Lord, respecting eating His flesh and drinking His blood,—the strongest expressions which are found in the writings of the Apostles,—are interchanged with others which point us to *a spiritual appropriation of His sacrifice* by a lively and earnest *faith*. To such an appropriation of the one perfect sacrifice for sin every penitent sinner, every humble believer, is invited; and this is followed by the attainment, and then by the confirmation and nourishment, of spiritual life. The “altar” of which we “eat” is *the Cross*, and as we appropriate Christ the Crucified, all the benefits of His redeeming work accrue to us.* More especially, as often as we approach the table of the Lord, it is our privilege to take Christ afresh as our personal Saviour,—to make His sacrifice our own, according to the provisions of the mediatorial economy,—to realise His spiritual presence, and our own union with Him,—and thus to have our spiritual life matured, and our covenant-relation to God confirmed and sealed.

The Lord Jesus, then, we contend, is the *only* priest, in the strict and proper sense, under the Christian economy. The ministry which He has established in His Church, and which He maintains, from age to age, is entrusted, indeed, with important functions,—functions bearing on the edification of His people and the evangelisation of the world. We are “Ambassadors” for Him: we have to go forth to men,

* See note G.

to announce the message of reconciliation, to declare the grand provision on which it rests, that "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," and then to entreat them, as though God did beseech them by us, to be reconciled to God. We are Pastors of the flock, called to feed that flock with heavenly truth, and to guard it by the maintenance of a kind, and wise, and holy discipline. But we are not Priests. We have not the essential characteristics of the priestly office. We have not been constituted, by Divine appointment, the representatives of our fellows, so as in their name and in their stead to go into the presence of the Most High, to offer sacrifice on their behalf. We only share in the spiritual priesthood which is common to all believers; and we can address our people in the beautiful language of St. Paul, "Now He which stablisheth *us with you* in Christ, and *hath anointed us*, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22).

And now we gladly turn, in conclusion, to a more congenial topic,—the *benefits* which flow to us from the priestly mediation of our adorable Lord.

Through that mediation longsuffering is extended to the guilty, and all the provisions of the economy of grace are brought into operation, to arouse men to reflection, and melt them into penitence. Through that mediation, in particular, the Holy Spirit is sent down to convince men of sin, and especially of the crowning sin, in which every wrong principle of the human heart finds its worst expression, the rejection or neglect of the offered Saviour. To the penitent seeker of salvation the intercession of the Lord Jesus opens the way to the very throne of God, as the throne where grace

and righteousness commingle in the justification of all who believe in Him. The Spirit convinces us of "righteousness," since He, our Representative, has gone to the Father, to present His own perfect sacrifice on our behalf; and, as we rely on Him, the Eternal Father shines forth upon us, and welcomes us as His children. The mediation of our Lord, also, secures to us, as His believing people, unfailing supplies of grace,—grace adapted to every variety of circumstances in which we can be placed, grace which meets the deepest wants of our spirits, and which shall be vouchsafed until the very end of our probationary course.

Throughout the Christian life, for instance, the priestly intercession of our Lord avails to our continual acceptance with the Father. Were it not for the unfailing efficacy of His sacrifice, we could not stand in the Divine presence. The consciousness of our manifold imperfections and omissions of duty—not to speak of the wanderings of our heart from God—would cause us to shrink back from the Divine purity, and overwhelm us with confusion. But we look up to our great High Priest with penitent and believing hearts, and we feel that through Him the Father still accepts us, and invests us with the privileges of His children. Even if, through yielding to temptation, we have lost our peace, and brought darkness over our souls, the priestly mediation of our Lord opens to us the method of return, and assures us that God will yet be gracious to us. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1).

From our enthroned High Priest, too, we receive constant supplies of spiritual strength, to qualify us for duty, and to

sustain us in temptation and conflict. We have seen that the Holy Spirit, whose sevenfold energy, whose abiding, manifold, exhaustless grace, is the hope of the Church, is the gift of the Lord Jesus, as the Mediator who has fully accomplished the work of atonement, and has gone into the Father's presence. "It is expedient for you," He said to His disciples, "that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you " (John xvi. 7). By the gift of the Spirit our Lord strengthens us for a course of service to Himself ; and by that gift, also, He enables us to conquer in every season of spiritual conflict. And may we not look up to Him, in our darkest hours of temptation, with the confidence, that He who said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," thinks of us *individually*, and will Himself interpose, by special communications of grace, and by putting restraint on our spiritual foes, to deliver us in the hour of greatest spiritual peril?

Still, further, the priestly mediation of our Lord assures us of the rich bestowment of comfort and peace in seasons of sorrow and affliction. To Him, indeed, we are encouraged to look up as still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," as possessing human sympathy in connection with the fulness of Divine resources. He, then, is the Refuge and Hope of His people, when the dark shadows of adversity gather round them,—when the bitter stroke of bereavement wounds their tenderest sensibilities, and the cheerful companionship which gladdened the domestic circle is exchanged for the loneliness of an almost desolate home,—and when their strength rapidly declines, and the wasting of nature admonishes them that their earthly course is nearly over. To

all His suffering people He, as the exalted Mediator, imparts a measure of His own heavenly peace. Often, in their darkest hours, a light from above breaks in upon them, and a power which is not their own calms, and even gladdens, their spirits. Thus they realise the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, when about to depart to the Father: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John xiv. 27).

The priestly intercession of the Lord Jesus affords us the greatest encouragement to seek and expect the entire sanctification of our nature. The covenant of which He is the Mediator, as He carries on His ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, is distinguished by its fulness of spiritual power. Unlike the preparatory covenant made with the people of Israel, it contains the promise of abundant Divine influence,—and that influence specially put forth to bring our minds and hearts into perfect accordance with the Divine will. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people" (Heb. viii. 10). Already the people of Christ, placed through Him under the Father's smile, and made by Him partakers of the Holy Ghost, reflect, in some degree, His own purity; and their course on earth is to be one of progressive sanctification,—sanctification carried on by the continual application of His truth to their minds, with ever-increasing clearness and power, and by the constant supply of that inward spiritual life which is derived from Him, their Lord and Head. But while we hold that this process is to go on to the very close of our probationary

career, surely we should be encouraged by our Lord's priestly mediation, to look with confidence for the grace which shall cleanse us from all moral pollution, and hallow every energy of our being to the service of our covenant-God. He who, as our High Priest, identifies us with Himself, and whose never-failing intercession assures to us the fulness of the Spirit, "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

Yes; the salvation which He bestows is a *complete* salvation. It includes the reversal of the sentence of condemnation,—our restoration to all the privileges of sonship to God, a sonship now more glorious and blessed than that possessed by Adam before the fall, since He, the Incarnate Son of God, stands at our head, and owns us as His brethren,—the communication of an inward life which involves the power of spiritual obedience,—the sanctification of our entire nature to God,—and our ultimate conformity to our glorified Redeemer Himself. But between us and this blessed consummation there stands the mortal conflict with its exhaustion, and pain, and the deep humiliation to which it subjects our nature. But even in this the grace of the Lord Jesus will sustain us. He has changed for us the character of death, and divested it of all its terrors. We do not "see death," in its natural and original horrors; we "sleep" through Him who has redeemed us with His blood, while the imperishable life which He imparts is untouched by the stroke of the last enemy. And He is near to succour His dying people. He vouchsafes to them special consolations; while bright visions of the future, and foretastes of the glory upon which they are about to enter, sometimes cause them to exult and triumph. The declaration of the Psalmist, "Yea, though I walk through the

valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. xxiii. 4), is re-echoed with yet greater confidence by the thoughtful Christian, to whom the perfected scheme of redemption is unfolded. Rejoicing in the "strong consolation" which he enjoys, through the promise and oath of God's covenant, as he clings to the Lord Jesus, "the Hope set before him," he can add with sacred assurance, "Which Hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. vi. 19, 20).

NOTES.

NOTE A, Page 13.

THE express words of the Scriptural narrative place this fact beyond a doubt. In the instructions given to Moses relative to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office, we read, “And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him” (Exod. xxix. 21). In the account of their actual consecration, according to the prescribed rites, we first find the anointing of Aaron himself mentioned:—“And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him” (Levit. viii. 12). But at a later stage of the proceedings, his sons are also said to have been anointed:—“And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons’ garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him” (v. 30). While, however, all who were set apart to the priestly office were anointed with the holy anointing oil,—the beautiful emblem of that grace of the Holy Spirit which only could qualify them for the right discharge of their peculiar functions,—it is clear that the anointing of the High Priest was *special*, and that on *his head* the sacred oil was poured out in abundance. Thus he was sometimes emphatically designated “the anointed priest,” and in reference to him we read in Leviticus xxi. 10—13, “And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes; neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father,

or his mother ; neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God ; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him : I am the Lord."

NOTE B, Page 23.

The subject alluded to in this paragraph of the Lecture is one which will repay the careful meditation of the student, but which requires to be dwelt upon with profound reverence. No writer, perhaps, has presented it in a clearer or more impressive manner than the Rev. W. B. Pope, in his Fernley Lecture on *The Person of Christ*. After speaking of the relation of the Son to the Father, as "God of God," and affirming that "in His eternal subordination to the Father, as the Fountain of the Deity,—a subordination without inferiority,—lies the possibility of His mission to our race, and of His acceptance of that mission;" he goes on to say, "The special relation of the Eternal Son to the race of mankind may suggest another reason, or rather another aspect of the same reason. There are not wanting intimations in Holy Writ of an essential affinity between the Son, the express image of the Person of God, and man, created also in the Divine image. 'All things,' says St. Paul, referring however primarily to man, 'were created by Him and for Him' (Col. i. 16): words upon which meditation may inexhaustibly dwell. 'For Him' were we created, even as He redeemed us for 'Himself;' the image of God in us, all the greatness of our nature being a reflection, distant yet true, of His eternal mind. He is 'the Firstborn before every creature:' again we must understand that man is pre-eminently meant; and the Apostle signifies, not simply that the Son was begotten before the creature,—a declaration that is included but does not fully explain this most unusual phrase,—but that the intelligent creation, and especially man, the elect creature of God, was made after the image and likeness of the Son, with the elements of a nature capable of being partaker of the Divine, to be afterwards crowned and redeemed by Him when He should 'come to His own.'"—(Pp. 9, 10, Second Edition.)

To this passage we may add one from the same author's recent

work on *Christian Theology*. In unfolding the truth that man was made in the image of God, he says, "The doctrine of the Divine image in man is carried to its highest point, and beyond the Old Testament record, when it is connected with the Eternal Son as the original, absolute, archetypal image of God. This description of the Second Person is, next to that of Son, the most common in the New Testament; it almost becomes a proper name. He is the εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ, the IMAGE OF GOD, as the outbeaming of all His glories and the full expression of His nature. In the image of that Image was man created. Both in His first and in His second creation the Son is the archetype and pattern. It was this specific relation of the Son that made Him the Redeemer of the fallen race: a truth that may be pondered profitably, if it is not perverted into the notion of a necessary incarnation of the Son of God."—(P. 180.)

It appears evident that the remarkable phraseology of the passage of the Epistle to the Colossians cited in the Lecture was intended to indicate the special relation of the Son to the created universe, and in particular to the human race. In illustration of the Apostle's statement in the 16th verse, that "*in Him were all things created*," Canon Lightfoot says, "All the laws and purposes which guide the creation and government of the Universe reside in Him, the Eternal Word, as their meeting-point. The Apostolic doctrine of the Logos teaches us to regard the Eternal Word as holding the same relation to the Universe which the Incarnate Christ holds to the Church. He is the source of its life, the centre of all its developments, the mainspring of all its motions. The use of ἐν to describe His relations to the Church abounds in St. Paul (*e.g.* Rom. viii. 1, 2; xii. 5; xvi. 3, 7, 9, etc.; 1 Cor. i. 30; iv. 15, 17; vii. 39; xv. 13, 22, etc.), and more especially in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians (*e.g.* below ii. 7, 10). In the present passage, as in v. 17, the same preposition is also applied to His relations to the universe; compare John i. 4, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν (more especially if we connect the preceding ὁ γέγονεν with it). Thus it is part of the parallelism which runs through the whole passage, and to which the occurrence of πρωτότοκος in both relations gives the key."

NOTE C, Page 32.

An extended review of the several theories of the atonement which diverge from the representations of Holy Scripture may be found in Professor Crawford's work entitled *The Doctrine of the Holy Scripture respecting the Atonement*, Second Edition. That work contains also an elaborate statement of the Scriptural evidence by which the vicarious and expiatory character of the Redeemer's death is sustained; and the reader who carefully examines the passages adduced can scarcely fail to have a profound conviction, that this truth pervades the teaching of the New Testament, and is intimately interwoven with the whole system of Christian doctrine. It is a pleasure to refer, also, to the masterly and eloquent Lectures of the Rev. R. W. Dale, in which the teaching of our Lord on this subject, and] that of St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and St. Paul are examined at length, and are clearly shown to imply that the death of Christ is [the objective ground on which only the sins of men are remitted, and the fulness of grace and blessing is imparted to them. The two volumes of Professor Smeaton, entitled respectively, *The Doctrine of the Atonement as taught by Christ Himself*, and *The Doctrine of the Atonement as taught by the Apostles*, may also be consulted with advantage. Nor can I omit to mention the valuable Essays of the Rev. Dr. Rigg on the Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement, comprised in his *Modern Anglican Theology*, in which he has pointed out, with great ability, the fallacy of some of the modern theories which are proposed in the place of the simple teaching of the Gospel respecting the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

A single illustration may be added of one point affirmed in the Lecture,—that all the reasonings of the Inspired Writers of the New Testament are influenced by the doctrine of our Lord's substitution, and their whole phraseology moulded by it. In the Epistle to the Galatians there is a remarkable passage, in which St. Paul sets forth his own experience, as illustrative of that of believers generally:—"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the

life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God : for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (ii. 19—21). Now in this passage the Apostle affirms that, in virtue of his interest in the death of the Lord Jesus,—such an interest that that death was virtually his,—he had been released from the condemning grasp of the law, and had entered upon a new life ; and that that life, derived as it was from Christ Himself, was sustained by the constant exercise, on his part, of faith in Him as the Son of God who had loved him and given Himself for him,—a faith, therefore, which apprehended the death of the Lord Jesus as substitutionary, and which appropriated that death with all its saving benefits. And then he adds an argument to show the impossibility of justification by the deeds of the law, and to prove that the endeavour thus to attain to righteousness before God necessarily involves a setting aside of God's scheme of grace in Christ:—"I do not frustrate the grace of God ; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Now it must be obvious that the whole structure of this argument is influenced by the fact of the atoning character of the death of the Lord Jesus, and its position as the basis of the economy of grace. That death is adverted to as an event the most peculiar and momentous,—one which would not have taken place had it not been essential to our recovery, had it not been, indeed, the one means of opening to us, who were guilty and polluted, the way of righteousness and life.

NOTE D, Page 36.

On the subject alluded to at the close of this paragraph, Dr. Pye Smith has the following cautious remarks in his *First Lines of Christian Theology* :—"Whether, in the heavenly state, there is any act of the exalted Messiah *analogous* to prayer, we are not in a capacity to determine. If there be, we are sure that it must be essentially different from our prayers in the present state. There can be nothing in it of anxiety or precariousness. Yet surely there may be a mode possessing some analogy to prayer, but

without any imperfection, by which is in the strongest manner represented the *dependence* of the whole Church of the Redeemed upon the Original and Perpetual Cause of Good." (P. 541, Second Edition.) The Rev. W. B. Pope, in his *Compendium of Christian Theology*, after speaking of the intercession of Christ as "the presentation of HIMSELF before the Father for us," goes on to say, "The intercession of Christ is also direct supplication on behalf of its objects. The words used to describe it prove this. *He maketh intercession for us*: ἐντυγχάνειν is used of oral supplication either for or against. And Christ is called our παράκλητος *with the Father*, our Advocatus or Intercessor, fulfilling His promise that He would *pray the Father* for His disciples, and continuing in heaven the high-priestly prayer begun on earth. As to the speech of the glorified Son Incarnate, the tongue not of man nor of angels, the unspeakable words which it is not lawful to utter, it is needless to inquire. Suffice that the Saviour's intercession has all the effect of what on earth is called intercessory prayer."—(P. 369.)

I cannot refrain from citing here the beautiful and comprehensive passage in which Dr. Pye Smith brings together the views given of our Lord's priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews:—"To what an extent has this survey carried us! Yet it is but a mere sketch, and, in respect of most of the particulars, it has been concise and abrupt. We have found our Lord and Redeemer described as the PRIEST, the Great Priest, the High Priest,—Sole, —Supreme;—Divinely appointed in a manner consonant with His unrivalled dignity;—standing in an assumed relation to mankind, for the purpose of making a sacrificial and consecrating offering:—submitting to the most bitter sorrows, agonies, and death;—effecting a real propitiation and expiation for the sinful state of mankind, in all the senses and respects which are suitable to the immutability of the Divine perfections, and the glorious honour of the Divine government:—rich in power and grandeur, and equally so in compassion and tenderness;—absolute for all the purposes of salvation;—possessed of all moral perfection;—exalted above the highest of created natures;—taking as His own, and occupying as His indisputable right, a station of glory and dignity which

only Deity could assume ;—reigning with an invincible dominion over all created beings, to the happiness and joy of the holy, and to the restraint and just punishment of the rebellious ;—and bestowing on sinful and undeserving men the greatest blessings, not shadowy and figurative, but real, substantial, enduring, and boundless ; the pardon of sin, the favour of God, conformity to the holiness of the Divine Nature, and everlasting blessedness. Other august and instructive titles are also given to our Lord Jesus Christ in relation to His priesthood. He is held forth to us as the *Messenger* sent by the Eternal and most Merciful Father, and fulfilling the great moral design of the Levitical institution ;—the *Minister* of the most holy place, presiding over the universal worship of His people, and rendering it acceptable to the throne of perfect purity ;—the *Lord* who spake by the prophets, and now by His apostles, concerning the great salvation acquired by His sufferings ;—the *Sanctifier*, who by His blood consecrates and presents to God all His true followers ;—the *Brother* of those for whom He came to die, and whom he condescends, as the act of a superior nature, to nominate into this endearing relation to Himself ;—the *Surety*, a pledge of salvation from God to man, and of obedience from man to God ;—the *Mediator*, transacting the most important concerns between the righteous Ruler of the world and His revolted subjects, in order to their reconciliation and restoration, and accomplishing this great work by means of His sacrificial blood ;—the *Princely Author* of life, faith, and salvation, achieving His great purpose by His sufferings and death ;—a *Saviour* to the uttermost, because He offered up Himself and hath an unchangeable priesthood ;—an *Intercessor* and *Advocate*, faithfully and powerfully maintaining our infinite interests, upon the ground and reason of the propitiation by His blood ;—the *Forerunner*, securing to His followers the heavenly inheritance, by virtue of His priestly oblation ;—the *Great Shepherd*, conferring the blessings of the everlasting covenant through the efficacy of His blood ;—the Son of God, partaking the flesh and blood of the children of Adam, that through His own death He might accomplish their redemption ; and to depreciate whose blood is the most dreadful of offences.

“Such being the declarations concerning the personal character of our Divine High Priest, and His qualities in the discharge of His office; we have collected from the same source additional illustrations of the OFFICE itself, and its necessary adjuncts. It stands *alone* and *unrivalled*;—it is *perfect*, for all the purposes of Divine mercy and wisdom;—it is a *real* priesthood, all others being but emblems and representations of it;—it contained the essential quality of a priesthood, the offering of an *immolated sacrifice*;—this sacrifice is efficacious by a continual *presentation* in the heavenly world;—and it produces the most happy EFFECTS, the *ratification* of the promulgated covenant of grace,—Christ’s mediatorial right of conferring infinite blessings;—the *reconciliation* of sinners to their justly offended Sovereign;—*entitling* to the full benefits and enjoyments of the great salvation; it is the great instrument, by the efficient grace of the Holy Spirit, in *producing personal holiness*;—by it Christians have the most favoured *access* to the throne of grace;—in a word (and could a more touching representation be presented to a creature’s mind, of the majesty of eternal holiness, and the efficacy of the great sacrifice?) it *guards the purity of heaven* from being dishonoured by the admission of those who, without the purifying blood, would have been odious and disgusting.”—(*Four Discourses on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Jesus Christ*. Third Edition. Pp. 149—152.)

NOTE E, Page 41.

To exhibit more fully the Romish doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and to confirm the statement in the Lecture as to the ground on which the priestly character is claimed for the Christian Ministry, the following additional passages may be cited from the Decrees and Canons of the Council of Trent. Under the second head of the Decree on the Sacrifice of the Mass, we read,

“And since in this Divine sacrifice, which is offered in the Mass, that very Christ is contained, and is immolated without

blood, who on the altar of the Cross offered Himself in a bloody manner once for all; this holy Synod teaches, that this sacrifice is truly *propitiatory*, and that through it, if with a true heart and right faith, with fear and reverence, we come contrite and penitent to God, we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. For the Lord, being appeased by the oblation of this sacrifice, bestowing grace and the gift of penitence, remits crimes and sins, even though they are great. For it is one and the same Victim, and the same Offerer now, through the ministry of His priests, who then offered Himself upon the Cross, the *mode* only of offering being different. Of which bloody oblation we receive the fruit abundantly through this unbloody one; so far is this from derogating, in any manner, from the virtue of that. Wherefore it is properly offered, according to the tradition of the Apostles, not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of living believers, but also for the dead in Christ who are not yet fully purified."

The first three Canons on the subject are as follows:—

"1. If any one shall affirm that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, or that the offering is nothing else than that Christ is given to us to eat; let him be accursed.

"2. If any one shall affirm that by these words, 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' Christ did not constitute His Apostles priests, or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer His body and blood; let him be accursed.

"3. If any one shall affirm that the sacrifice of the Mass is only one of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, but not propitiatory; or that it only benefits him who receives it, and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be accursed."

The inconsistencies involved in the doctrine of transubstantiation are exposed, in a very clear and able manner, by the Rev. Dr. Enoch Mellor, in his Congregational Union Lecture, entitled "Priesthood in the light of the New Testament." Dr. Mellor has also pointed out the utter fallacy of the assertion, advanced not

only by Romish theologians, but by the late Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Hamilton, that the words used by our Lord in the institution of His Supper, τοῦτο ποιείτε, "Do this," really mean "Sacrifice this." In opposition to this view, Dr. Mellor properly says, "If such were the case, it is surprising that an argument so conclusive was never, so far as I know, advanced even by those to whom the Greek, and even the Alexandrian Greek, was their native tongue, and who must have been aware of the technical meaning of the verb ποιεῖν. This consideration in itself would impair the credit of the bishop's assumption; but I hazard the assertion that the worthy prelate could not find a single passage in which τοῦτο ποιείτε ever signifies "Sacrifice this," except when the idea of sacrifice is already distinctly mentioned in terms which define the nature of the transaction; and in such cases τοῦτο ποιείτε may denote anything or everything which has been thus defined. For example: when the young man answered our Lord's question, 'What is written in the law? How readest thou?' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,' the Saviour said, 'τοῦτο ποίει (this do), and thou shalt live.' But what would be thought of a principle of interpretation which should affirm that sometimes τοῦτο ποιείτε means, in Alexandrian or Hellenistic Greek, 'Fulfil the commandments'? A lexicon which should range under the verb ποιεῖν, 'to love God and man perfectly,' would be deemed a curiosity; and, in order to complete a list of meanings thus capriciously invented, would require to exhaust all possible forms of human activity."—(Pp. 213, 214.)

NOTE F, Page 43.

The quotations in this paragraph are taken from a remarkable document, which may be regarded as in the highest degree authoritative. On May 30th, 1867, Archdeacon Denison sent to the then Archbishop of Canterbury the following declaration to be presented by him to the Bishops of his province. A copy of it

was also sent by the Archdeacon to the *Standard* newspaper, and appeared in that paper on June 4th, 1867.

“ To his Grace, Charles Thomas, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan, &c.

“ Whereas, at this present time, imputations of disloyalty to the Church of England are current, to the discredit of those who have been, some of them for many years, inculcating and defending the doctrines of the real objective presence, of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and of the adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; and whereas, by reason of these imputations, the minds of many are troubled; we, therefore, the undersigned, exercising the office of the priesthood within the Church of England, beg respectfully to state to your Grace, and, through your Grace, to our right reverend fathers in God, the Bishops of your province, and to the Church at large, what we believe to be the mind of our Lord touching the said doctrines, as expressed in Holy Scripture, and as received by the Church of England, in conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Church in those ages to which the Church of England directs us as ‘most pure and uncorrupt,’ and of ‘the old godly doctors,’ to whom she has in many ways referred us,—declaring hereby both what we repudiate, and what we believe, touching the said doctrines.

“ 1. We repudiate the opinion of a ‘corporal presence of Christ’s natural flesh and blood;’ that is to say, of the presence of His body and blood as they ‘are in heaven;’ and the conception of the mode of His presence which implies any physical change of the natural substances of the bread and wine, commonly called ‘transubstantiation.’

“ We believe that, in the Holy Eucharist, by virtue of the consecration, through the power of the Holy Ghost, the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, ‘the inward part or thing signified,’ are present, really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, under ‘the outward visible part or sign,’ or ‘form of bread and wine.’

“ 2. We repudiate the notion of any fresh sacrifice, or any view of the Eucharistic sacrificial offering as of something apart from the one all-sufficient sacrifice and oblation on the Cross, which alone is ‘that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for

all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual,' and which alone is 'meritorious.'

"We believe that, as in heaven Christ, our great High Priest, ever offers Himself before the Eternal Father, pleading by His presence His sacrifice of Himself once offered on the Cross; so on earth, in the Holy Eucharist, that same body, once for all sacrificed for us, and that same blood, once for all shed for us, sacramentally present, are offered and pleaded before the Father by the priest, as our Lord ordained to be done in remembrance of Himself, when He instituted the blessed sacrament of His body and blood.

"3. We repudiate all 'adoration' of 'the sacramental bread and wine,' which would be 'idolatry;' regarding them with the reverence due to them because of their sacramental relation to the body and blood of our Lord: we repudiate also all adoration of 'a corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood,' that is to say, of the presence of His body and blood as they 'are in heaven.'

"We believe that Christ Himself, really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably, present in the sacrament, is therein to be adored.

"Furthermore, in so far as any of the undersigned, repudiating and believing as hereinbefore stated, have used, in whatever degree, a ritual beyond what had been common in our Churches, we desire to state that we have done so, not as wishing to introduce a system of worship foreign to the Church of England, but as believing that, in so doing, we act in harmony with the principles and the law of the Church of England, and as using that liberty which has, in such matters, been always allowed to her clergy and people; having at heart the promotion of the glory of God in the due and reverent celebration of the Holy Eucharist as the central act of Divine worship.

"In making the above statement we desire expressly to guard ourselves against being supposed to put it forth as any new exposition of the faith; nor do we seek to elicit from your Grace, or from our right reverend fathers in God, the Bishops of your province, any declaration in regard to the subjects upon which we

have here stated our belief: we wish only thus publicly to make known this our profession of faith, for the quieting of the minds of others, and for the satisfaction of our own consciences."

- Signed*, BUTLER, W., Vicar of Wantage.
 CARTER, T. T., Rector of Clewer.
 CHAMBERLAIN, T., Vicar of St. Thomas the Martyr, Oxford.
 CHAMBERS, S. C., Perpetual Curate of St. Mary's, Crown Street, Soho.
 COURTENAY, C. L., Vicar of Bovey Tracey.
 DENISON, G. A., Vicar of East Brent, Archdeacon of Taunton.
 GRUEBER, C. S., Incumbent of St. James the Less, Hambridge.
 LIDDELL, R., Perpetual Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.
 LIDDON, H. P., Student of Christ Church, Prebendary of Salisbury.
 LITTLEDALE, R. T., LL.D., D.C.L., Priest of Diocese of London.
 MACKONOCHE, A. H., Perpetual Curate of St. Alban's, Holborn.
 MAYOW, W. M., Perpetual Curate of St. Mary's, West Brompton.
 MEDD, P. G., Fellow and Tutor of University College, and Curate of St. John Baptist, Oxford.
 MURRAY, F. H., Rector of Chislehurst.
 PERRY, T. W., Curate of St. Michael and All Angels, Brighton.
 PUSEY, E. B., D.D., Prof. of Hebrew, Canon of Christ Church.
 RICHARDS, W. U., Incumbent of All Saints, Margaret Street.
 SKINNER, J., Vicar of Newland, Great Malvern.
 WARD, W. P., Rector of Compton Valence.
 WHITE, G. C., Perpetual Curate of St. Barnabas, Pimlico.
 WILLIAMS, G., Senior Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

NOTE G, Page 45.

It may be satisfactory to the reader to find this exposition of Heb. xiii. 10 confirmed by several expositors of eminence. Dean Alford writes, "*We have an altar.* To what does the writer

allude ? Some have said, (Schlichting, Sykes, Michaelis, Kuinoel, and even Tholuck,) that no distinct idea was before him, but that he merely used the term *altar* to help the figure which he was about to introduce. And this view has just so much truth in it, that there is no emphasis on *θυσιαστήριον*: it is not *θυσιαστήριον* ἔχομεν. The altar bears only a secondary place in the figure ; but still I cannot think that it has not a definite meaning. Others understand by the altar *Christ Himself*. So Suicer, Wolf, Cyr. Alex. de adoratione IX. vol. I. p. 310. This again has so much truth in it, that the Victim is so superior to the altar as to cast it altogether into shade ; but still is not Himself the altar. Some again (Corn. a Lapide, Böhme, Bähr, Ebrard, Bisping, Stier, al.) understand *the table of the Lord*, at which we eat the Lord's Supper. This is so far true, that that table may be said to *represent* to us the cross whereupon the sacrifice was offered, just as the bread and wine, laid on it, represent the oblation itself: but it is not the altar, in any propriety of language, however we may be justified, in common parlance, in so calling it. Some again, as Bretschneider, have interpreted it to mean *the heavenly place*, where Christ now offers the virtue of His blood to the Father for us. This again is so far true that it is the antitype of the Cross, just as the Cross is the antitype of the Lord's table : but we do not want, in this word, the heavenly thing represented by, any more than the enduring ordinance representing, the original historic concrete material altar. We want that altar itself: and that altar is the Cross on which the Lord suffered. That is our altar: not to be emphasised, nor exalted into any comparison with the adorable Victim thereon offered ; but still our altar, that wherein we glory, that for which, as 'pro aris,' we contend : of which our banners, our tokens, our adornments, our churches, are full: severed from which we know not Christ; laid upon which He is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. And so it is here explained by Thomas Aquinas, Jac-Cappell., Estius, Bengel, Ernesti, Bleek, De Wette, Stengel, Lünem., Delitzsch." The writer last referred to, Dr. Delitzsch, says, "The one altar of sacrifice around which the Church of the New Testament is gathered, and where she knows all her grace and acceptance to have been procured, is

unquestionably the place where Christ offered Himself in sacrifice. . . . It can only be the cross on Golgotha, the sacred writer himself going on immediately to speak of the place of the passion 'without the camp.' " After adverting to some other interpretations, Dr. Delitzsch adds, "Why should not the words *ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον* express the truth that we are possessed, as Christians, of a place of atonement, seeing that the cross of Golgotha was from all eternity the predestined place of offering for the greatest of all sacrifices, and that as now for the faith of the Church of all times it has possessed, so for all eternity it will retain, this high, unique, mysterious dignity? The altar of the Church of the redeemed is, then, *her Redeemer's cross*. It is a point, however, on which the sacred writer is not here insisting with any emphasis. He neither says *θυσιαστήριον ἔχομεν*, *an altar is ours*, nor *καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν θυσ.*, *we also have an altar*. The point emphasised is this, that those who minister to the tabernacle cannot partake of this our altar."

Dr. Enoch Mellor's observations on this passage are well deserving of attention. After citing it, as one of those on which they who maintain the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice are accustomed to rely, he says, "Nothing but a theory in sore distress could repair to such a passage for succour; for the context both before and after forbids its perverted application to the sacrificial theory of the Lord's Supper. The writer, be it remembered, throughout the main portion of this Epistle, has been comparing and contrasting two dispensations, one of which, as he says in the previous verse, has been distinguished by 'meats,' and the other is distinguished by 'grace;' and he says it is good that 'the heart be established with grace,' and 'not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.' These meats have pertained to carnal ordinances and a worldly sanctuary. They have had relation to a dispensation in which there was an altar. We also 'have an altar' in this dispensation of grace. One altar, be it observed, and not many. One altar in and for the dispensation, and not an altar in every church. And of this altar those who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat. 'For as the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is

brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp; so Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.' The sin offerings of the ancient dispensation are here unquestionably contrasted with the sacrifice of Christ; and consequently *the altar must be the cross on which He died*, for it is to the death of Christ, and to the place where He was crucified, that the writer alludes. And the eating of which he speaks denotes the participation of the benefits which Christ procured for men, but of which they cannot partake who continue to reject Him, and serve at the tabernacle; for in persisting in such service they are practically denying that another Priest, another altar, and another Victim have abolished for ever the typical ordinances by which they were foreshadowed."—(*Priesthood*, pp. 230, 231.)

In a note Dr. Mellor cites a valuable passage from the Sermon of the late learned Bishop Kaye on the Eucharist, in which the same view is given of the Apostle's meaning. "I am aware," says that prelate, "only of one passage in the New Testament which can, with any plausibility, be alleged in support of the opinion that the Apostles contemplated the continuance of propitiatory sacrifices in the Church of Christ. It is that in which the Apostle says, 'We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.' An altar, it is contended, implies a sacrifice to be offered, and a priest to offer it; and hence it is inferred that in the Eucharist Christ is offered as a sacrifice in the proper sense of the word. It is true that some commentators have understood the passage of the Eucharist; though if we compare it with the context, we shall find good reason to think, that the altar which the Apostle had in his mind was the altar of Christ's cross. Let it be granted, however, that there is an allusion to the Eucharist; still the sacrifices to be offered are not material but spiritual; not propitiatory, but of thanksgiving; the sacrifices, as we have just seen, of praise and good deeds."

To these quotations I will only add, that true Christians may be said to *eat* of this altar, when they spiritually *appropriate* the sacrifice once offered on the cross, so as to derive from it life, and peace, and strength.

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